

## THE CRISIS MAY BE OVER, BUT THE NEED TO COMMUNICATE ISN'T

The satellite trucks have packed up and moved on to their next target. The reporters who clung on city leadership's every word have gone back to whatever they usually do. You have weathered the storm (perhaps literally). So now what? The crisis may be over, but your need for crisis management communications is not. The final piece of the puzzle is demonstrating to your "target audience" that the city is back to business as usual. That means communicating with your citizens, and the reporters who regularly inform them about city business. Your overall messaging goal is to let the public know that city operations are back to normal, or at least as close to "normal" as is possible under the circumstances.

For example:

- If a major roadway has been damaged or destroyed, highlight the fact that temporary routes have been established and traffic is now flowing smoothly. Express empathy toward motorists who are inconvenienced by the unavoidable detour, and give them some idea how long construction might take.
- If a common city service will be unavailable for a period of time, explain how the public will receive alternative services and how soon things will be back up and running. For example:
  - If the crisis knocked the municipal water treatment plant out of service, inform the public how they can obtain water from backup sources, and how long that will be necessary.
  - If the crisis interrupted trash pickup, emphasize the good news that pickup has resumed – even if events require a new schedule.
- If public safety was impacted, indicate how law enforcement and other public safety personnel will be deployed moving forward in order to ensure the peace. Point out if the changes will be temporary, and assure the public that the new procedures will be implemented with as little disruption as possible.

The overall goal of your post-crisis communications must be to reassure members of the public that their city has come through the crisis and is ready to move forward. You want them to know that their municipal leaders have handled the emergency and are now moving the city forward.